

NSS, State Dept. review completed

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
EYES ONLY

July 21, 1971

MORI C03416763

Henry --

Karamessines says that for all intents and purposes the exercise is stopped due to heavy rains and enemy resistance and that in his judgment we have reached the limit of penetration. On the other hand, his man in Laos will be talking to Vang Pao tomorrow and a more considered judgment will be available sometime tomorrow or Saturday.



Al Haig

Attachment

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
EYES ONLY

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

AK - Clerk
letter Vang Pao
has been stopped
15 JUL 1971
HZ

WSAG PAPER

MEMORANDUM FOR:

✓ The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

The Honorable U. Alexis Johnson
Under Secretary of State for
Political Affairs

The Honorable David Packard
Deputy Secretary of Defense

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT:

General Vang Pao's Current
Operation on the Plain of Jars, Laos

1. I would like to draw the attention of the members of the Washington Special Action Group to the policy question raised by General Vang Pao's current operation on the Plain of Jars. The last WSAG consideration of military moves by Vang Pao was on 4 March 1971. The North Vietnamese Army was then besieging the immediate approaches to Long Tieng. The group at that time approved operations by Vang Pao to relieve pressure on Long Tieng. The approval included his movement onto the Plain of Jars but excluded operations against Xieng Khouangville.

2. The situation today is substantially different. Vang Pao has succeeded in lifting the siege of Long Tieng and, with the active encouragement of the King and Souvanna Phouma, has moved virtually unopposed onto the Plain of Jars. This action is taking place against the background of an exchange of letters between Souvanna Phouma and Souvanouvong with the objective of arranging

a cease fire and peace talks between the Royal Laos Government and the Neo Lao Hak Sat. One proposed site for the talks is at Khang Khay on the Plain of Jars.

3. The latest letter from Souvanouvong, dated 11 July, accuses the United States, the Lao rightists and Souvanna of being responsible for the present situation in Laos. The letter notes that whereas Souvanna Phouma in his most recent letter had proposed a limited cease fire around the Plain of Jars, a country-wide cease fire, as proposed by Souvanouvong, was possible by a simple declaration to that effect by the interested parties. The letter charges that Vang Pao's operation on the Plain of Jars is sabotaging prospects for peace talks. There has also been some press and Congressional attention to this operation.

25X1 4. We believe that although Vang Pao is in a militarily sound position he has reached the outer edges of the policy approval given in March. On 7 July 1971 Charge Stearns and the CIA Station Chief queried Vang Pao on his plans for continuing the offensive. The results of this conversation were reported to the Washington community in EXDIS American Embassy Vientiane cable number 4966 [redacted] Attached to this memorandum is a map which depicts the present positions of Vang Pao's troops on the Plain of Jars. These are substantially as reported after the 7 July meeting. In addition to the objectives on the Plain of Jars, Vang Pao said that if the military situation permitted he would like to move on to the road junctions at Nong Pet, Lat Bouak and to the town of Xieng Khouangville.

5. In the context of the current political situation at home and in Laos, the purpose of this memorandum is to seek policy review and approval of the current operation and specifically to insure that should Vang Pao decide that it is militarily feasible to move to Xieng Khouangville, Nong Pet and Lat Bouak that there are no policy objections to his doing so.



Richard Helms
Director

Attachment

SECRET

